(b) and (c) Safeguards are provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to prevent illegal lock outs and to protect the interests of the workers.

Workplace safety for industrial workers

296. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any survey regarding the workplace safety of the industrial workers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons theefor; and

(c) whether it is a fact that many safety regulations of the Statute Book are not effectively implemented and if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) The Government have not carried out any comprehensive survey regarding workplace safety of industrial workers in the country.

(b) There is no mandatory provision for carrying out surveys regarding workplace safety of industrial workers. However, the Factories Act, 1948 provides for survey of workplace safety which are carried out in the factories by the Chief Inspectors of Factories in the States. Similarly, the Directorate General of Mines Safety carries out such surveys in the mines.

(c) The safety provisions prescribed by the Acts and Rules framed thereunder are by and large complied with by the employers. However, whenever any violation of these provisions are noticed, necessary action is taken by the respective enforcement agency by way of issuing show cause notices, improvement notices and violation letters. The prosecution cases are also launched, wherever necessary.

Exemption to SEZs from EPF Act

297. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to exempt the Special Economic Zones from the purview of the Employees Provident Fund Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this decision amount to infringement of the rights of the workers;

(d) whether Government evolved any alternative mechanism to ensure the social security measures for the employees; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (e) It has been decided that in respect of Special Economic Zones, the State Government may apply for exemption, to the Central Government under Section 16(2) of the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, from the applicability of the provisions of the Act to SEZ for 5 years. The decision shall be taken on case-to-case basis.

Upgradation of ESI Hospitals and Dispensaries in Karnataka

298. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any initiatives for upgrading ESI Hospitals and dispensaries in Karnataka has been taken up;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether ESI hospital in Bangalore has been declared as a referral centre for all ESI hospitals in the State;

(d) if so, the facilities proposed to be provided there;

(e) whether there is any proposal to close down or merge some of the ESI dispensaries in the State which are not viable; and

(f) the amount proposed to be spent during the year 2003-04 for upgrading ESI hospitals and dispensaries in the State?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Modern equipment worth Rs. 325.61 lakhs has been sanctioned to upgrade ESI Hospitals/Dispensaries in Karnataka under various action plans.